

Hoffmann, R.  
Common birds: second series.

A-H [offman, R.]  
1900

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.



LIBRARY

OF THE

MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOÖLOGY

58.139

BEQUEST OF

WALTER FAXON

December 10, 1921.

DEC 10 1921

58, 139.

# COMMON BIRDS:

## SECOND SERIES



To accompany Audubon Bird Chart No. 2

Published by

Massachusetts Audubon Society, 234 Berkeley Street, Boston



# Common Birds: Second Series

BY

RALPH HOFFMANN

TO ACCOMPANY

AUDUBON BIRD CHART No. 2



MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY

234 BERKELEY STREET, BOSTON

1900



## NOTE.

---

The first Audubon Bird Chart, issued in 1898 and containing portraits of twenty-six of our commonest birds, has been so well received that the Massachusetts Audubon Society has published a second chart (designated as Chart No. II), showing twenty-six more of the common birds of New England and the Middle States. This chart, like its predecessor, has been prepared with great care under the supervision of Mr. Ralph Hoffmann, the drawings, as in the former case, being the work of Mr. Edward Knobel. The Society is further indebted to Mr. Hoffmann for the preparation of this descriptive pamphlet, which presents in a concise and readable form the principal facts in the life-histories of the twenty-six species shown upon the Chart, the numbers against the birds' names on the following pages referring to the corresponding numbers on the Chart.

The Charts are mounted on cloth and provided with rollers for hanging upon the wall. The size of each is 29 x 42 inches and the price (including pamphlet) is \$1.30 each, postpaid. Orders should be addressed to the Prang Educational Company, at 110 Boylston Street, Boston; 5 West 18th Street, New York; or 207 Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

The Secretary of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, who may be addressed at 234 Berkeley Street, Boston, will be glad to furnish information in regard to the work of the Society, which has for its object the protection of our native birds. New members are wanted, and a special membership card is issued to school-children.



## COMMON BIRDS : SECOND SERIES.

---

### Yellow-billed Cuckoo. 23.

[COCYZUS AMERICANUS.]

South of Massachusetts the two Cuckoos, the Yellow-billed and the Black-billed, are often equally common. In northern New England, however, the Yellow-billed is rarely, if ever, found. The habits of the two birds are essentially alike. Both are quiet and retiring, slipping unseen from one thick mass of foliage to another; or, if seen, preserving such immobility on alighting that their slim figures are hardly to be distinguished. The food of the Cuckoo consists largely of caterpillars, which the bird finds among the foliage, and its activity is thus highly beneficial. It is particularly useful in attacking the tent caterpillar, an insect which most other birds avoid. The two Cuckoos arrive in New England about the 10th of May, and a few linger into September or later. They spend the winter in tropical America. They may be distinguished by their notes, and on a near view by their marks. The call of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo is more wooden than that of the other species. Besides the rapidly repeated *cow-cow-cow*, the bird often utters a soft, gentle *coo*, repeating the note again and again. The reproach which attaches to the European Cuckoo and to our Cow-bird of shirking the duties of maternity, cannot be brought against the American Cuckoos. They make nests, rude though they are, of loose twigs, and on these hatch and rear their young. The eggs of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo are light greenish-blue, and are sometimes laid at irregular intervals, so that eggs and young of various ages may be found in the same nest.

*phœe'-bee'* note of the Chickadee. Both sexes also utter a sharp *chip*. When excited, and always on alighting, the Phœbe executes a peculiar movement of its tail, sideways and up. Like its cousin, the Kingbird, it chooses a perch where it can watch for gnats and flies. Its perch is not quite so conspicuous or high as that of the Kingbird, and its flight generally not so lofty or prolonged. The sexes are alike. A few Phœbes remain in New England till October, and many winter in the extreme South. Its early appearance, its constancy to its chosen home, and its fearless disposition, make the Phœbe a well-known and beloved tenant of country places.

## Wood Pewee. 8.

[*HORIZOPUS VIRENS*.]

The Wood Pewee is the last of our summer birds to return in spring. It is often the third week in May before the drawling *pee'-ee-wee'*, which has given the bird its name, is heard from the wood or grove where it spends the summer. Like the rest of the Flycatcher family, it hunts winged insects. A dead twig in the shade of some tall tree serves as its lookout post. Its nest is often built on a lichen-covered limb, and so covered with delicate green or gray lichens as to be almost indistinguishable from the limb itself. It is in the form of a shallow cup, and in it are laid three or four buff or cream-colored eggs, marked at the larger end with a few large, reddish-brown marks. The Pewee's song is one of the striking sounds of the woods; it generally consists of two parts, an upward drawl of three notes, followed a moment later by a downward fall of extreme sweetness and plaintiveness. Toward the end of August only the first phrase is given, and this is shortened by the omission of the last long note, so that the whole song is only *pee'-ah*. A few Pewees linger into late September, but the majority go early in the month or even in August, and pass into Central America to spend the winter.

## Least Flycatcher, or Chebec. 7.

[EMPIDONAX MINIMUS.]

The Chebec, or Least Flycatcher, returns to New England about the end of April. It is almost as domestic as the Phoebe, building its nest in the farm or village trees, or in orchards or groves on the borders of fields. The nest is very neatly built, of fine materials woven together with cottony or woolly substances, and placed generally on a small limb. The eggs are four, and white, and are laid about the first week of June. The emphatic note *che-bee'*, from which the bird gets its name, is snapped out so forcibly that the bird's head is at the same time violently jerked. This note is repeated almost incessantly till July, but is rarely heard in August. Both sexes have a sharp *whit*, and a little gurgling note, which often accompanies the flirting of wings and tail incident to settling on a new perch. The food of the Least Flycatcher consists almost entirely of winged insects caught by a sally from some exposed twig. The bird winters in Central America.

---

## Cowbird. 19.

[MOLOTHRUS ATER.]

Few people interested in birds have not heard the story of the female Cowbird's shiftlessness and meanness. Though many of its relatives are noted for their skill in nest-building, and their tender care of their young, this member of the family shirks all the labor of nesting and rearing her young. The mother skulks in the thickets, and in the absence of some vireo, sparrow, or warbler—birds smaller than herself—drops her egg in the empty nest. Here it hatches, and the young Cowbird is reared at the expense of a brood of more attractive birds. The sight of a small sparrow kept incessantly busy feeding a great, ugly youngster, bigger than herself, is almost pathetic. When the young Cowbird is full grown, it joins a flock of its relatives, who have meanwhile spent the summer lazily feeding, often in cow pastures, where, walking about the

cattle, they catch the insects that surround them. The male Cowbird is a handsome bird, with the iridescence common among the Blackbird family. He often arrives in March, and as he flies overhead utters a curious spluttering whistle. The females, which are smaller and grayish brown, come later. In spring they frequent ploughed fields and uplands, where they find beetles and grubs. In winter they live in flocks in the Southern States, associating with the other Blackbirds.

---

### Meadowlark. 16.

[STURNELLA MAGNA.]

Wherever the ground remains bare during the winter, the Meadowlark's plaintive whistled notes are heard in every month of the year. In the greater part of New England, however, it is migratory, leaving the brown fields in late autumn, and returning by the middle of March. Few birds are so easily recognized. Its notes, its flight, its movements when walking are all characteristic. The song is oftenest uttered from the top of a tree or tall bush, and, though sweet and strong, it has an extremely plaintive quality. When the singer is disturbed, his flight is heavy, and after two or three strokes, the bird sails for a moment, then flaps again. Besides the whistled song, the Meadowlark has a guttural chatter and a nasal *speke*, very like that of the Nighthawk. On the ground, the long legs lift the bird well above the grass; like all the Starling family, the Meadowlark walks. The tail is often twitched in a nervous manner, which shows the white outer feathers, which are even more conspicuously displayed when the bird flies. The nest is placed in an open field, is composed of grass, and is often concealed by an arch of the same material. The eggs are four or five, white, marked with brown and lilac. In New England they are laid in May. The food of the Meadowlark consists of insects and seeds; so many of the former are injurious locusts and beetles, that the bird is entitled to all possible protection, especially against gunners, who pursue it in fall and winter for its flesh.

### Bronzed Grackle, or Crow Blackbird. 3.

[QUISCALUS QUISCULA AENEUS.]

March is the month that we associate with the Blackbirds; the Redwings come to the hillsides and fields, and the Crow Blackbirds into the evergreens, where their tribe has squeaked and whistled for so many springs. The return of the Grackles to their home is celebrated by a discordant chorus of sounds, which suggested to Lowell the creaking of tavern signboards. The neighboring ploughed or grassy fields provide the colony with feeding grounds, where their food consists largely of beetles and grubs of various kinds. When their young are being fed (in early June in New England), there is a constant stream of silent, black figures passing from the pines to the favorite lawn or meadow. When the bird flies, the long tail is very conspicuous; by depressing the inner feathers, the bird gives it a curious keel-shaped appearance. If the Crow Blackbird ate only insects, many of which are pests, it would be purely a benefactor, but in the fall flocks of vast size (reaching in the West and South into the thousands) wander about the country, and do great damage to the crops. The bird has on this account enjoyed from the first an evil reputation, and is still exempt from protection in Massachusetts. The nest of the Crow Blackbird is generally placed in evergreens; it is composed of sticks and grasses often plastered with mud. The eggs are four or five, and vary from strong bluish-green to lighter shades of gray, marked, scrawled, or blotched with various shades of brown. The birds leave the breeding grounds early in the summer, and gather into greater or smaller flocks, a few remaining in New England as late as October. The species winters in great numbers from the Middle States southward. The variety common in Massachusetts and northwestward differs from the true *quiscula*, the Purple Grackle, which is found from New York southward, east of the Alleghanies, in having the purple confined to the head, and sharply defined from the bronze back. The female is smaller, and has less of the lustre.

## Bay-winged Bunting, or Vesper Sparrow. 26.

[POECETES GRAMINEUS.]

The Bay-winged Bunting is very generally confounded with the Song Sparrow, and both species are known to the farmers as Ground Sparrows. The Bay-wing, however, differs from its cousin not only in appearance and in general behavior, but also in its choice of a habitat. Instead of the bushy borders of wet places or the shrubbery along highways, in which the Song Sparrows delight, the Bay-wing haunts the pasture land, the mowings, and the edges of ploughed fields. It feeds much in the short grass, when disturbed runs and squats alternately, and when finally forced to rise, rarely disappears into shrubbery like its shyer cousin. It is less nervous, not jerking its tail so constantly. The two outer tail feathers are white, and serve to distinguish the Bay-wing, if they are clearly seen. They are not, however, as bright or conspicuous as the white V in the Snowbird's tail. The Bay-wing reaches New England early in April, and remains late in fall, often well into October. The winter quarters of the species are in the Southern States. The nest is placed on the ground, generally in short grass, and is lined with fine roots and grass. Four or five eggs are laid, everywhere spotted and marked with reddish brown. The song of the Bay-wing is to the ears of a beginner extremely like that of the Song Sparrow, but careful observation soon teaches one to distinguish between the two. The Bay-wing begins his song with two low, very sweet notes, and ends it with a succession of runs, so that the performance is not only longer than the Song Sparrow's but sweeter and more thoughtful. The names Grass Finch and Vesper Sparrow, often given to the Bay-wing, refer to its fondness for grass land and for singing at dusk.

---

## Chewink, or Towhee Bunting. 21.

[PIPILO ERYTHROPHthalmus.]

About the end of April, the Chewink returns to the dry hill-sides and clearings, and scratches among the leaves for insects or

seeds. When startled, the bird utters a rich, deep *che-wee'*, or *to-weet'*, from which its name has been derived. Like most of the bush-haunting birds, it knows well how to keep out of sight, but often a sudden alarm or curiosity brings the brightly marked male or his more sober-colored mate to the top of a wall or a low bush, where it flirts its tail, and hops nervously about till ready to descend and begin busily scratching again. The song is delivered from an exposed perch, especially in the early morning and again toward evening. It consists of a modification of the call note, followed by a rich trill. The nest is generally placed on the ground and never far from it, and is composed of twigs, roots, and grasses. Four eggs are laid, brownish or grayish white, finely marked with brown or lilac. The female, though more plainly colored than the male, is nevertheless a handsome bird. The head is brown instead of black, a color which harmonizes well with the chestnut on her flanks. Chewinks linger in New England into October, and winter in the Southern States. Like the Thrasher and the Field Sparrow they prefer the wild, overgrown berry pastures or clearings to the cultivated land, and rarely come into villages. They are vigorous and cheerful, not very musical, but dressed richly and in excellent taste.

---

### Cardinal, or Cardinal Grosbeak. 13.

[CARDINALIS CARDINALIS.]

Although the Cardinal, or Redbird, as it is more generally called, is familiar to nearly every one as a cage-bird, it is rarely found, in the wild state, north of New Jersey in the Eastern States, or of Ohio in the Middle States. It is a bird of the thickets, finding shelter and food, and a home in the nesting season, in the tangles of brier, holly, and laurel. It is resident nearly throughout its range, and whistles as cheerfully in winter as in spring. At this season its brilliant plumage makes it very conspicuous. It is noisy at all times, and the strength and variety of its notes have won for

it a place among our first songsters. The nest is a loose structure of bark, twigs, leaves, and grass, hidden securely in a thicket. The eggs are three to five, of a dull color, spotted with reddish brown. The Cardinal, like most resident birds, has a wide range of food, living at different seasons on fruit, berries, and insects. At no season is the bird harmful to gardeners. Its bright color, musical notes, and lively disposition make it everywhere a favorite.

---

### Rose-breasted Grosbeak. 17.

[ZAMELODIA LUDOVICIANA.]

A student of birds feels amply rewarded for long search by a sight of the beautiful rose-colored spot on the breast of the Grosbeak. The black head and the white spots on the wing, tail, and rump give the bird an equally fine appearance when flying, but the most brilliant performance one can enjoy is the sight of a male, fluttering with outspread wings, displaying the salmon tints far under each wing. The female lacks the bright colors of her mate, but may be recognized by her streaked breast and the size of her beak. The song of the Grosbeak is remarkably good ; it has been described as a "glorified Robin's." It is faster and sweeter than the Robin's, and is often repeated for many minutes from the same perch. Both sexes have a sharp click, like that of a pair of shears. The nest is rudely constructed of loose twigs, and placed in a bush or low tree. Three or four eggs are laid, of a greenish blue, thickly marked with dull reddish. The Grosbeak's bill of fare comprises buds, seeds, fruit, and insects. Among the latter are included the potato-beetle, an insect for which no other bird has shown a liking. The Grosbeak comes in that joyous week of May which ushers in orioles, bobolinks, tanagers, and thrushes, but in both melody and beauty it holds its own with its comrades. An occasional Grosbeak is seen through September, but before the end of that month nearly all have begun the journey to the tropics,

where they winter. In May the Grosbeak visits the blossoming fruit-trees, snipping off the petals and the undeveloped fruit. Suspicion has therefore fallen on him, but it is now believed by the best authorities that no direct injury can be traced to his activity, while undoubted good results from his attacks on the potato-beetle.

---

## Indigo Bunting, or Indigo-bird. 24.

[PASSERINA CYANEA.]

The Indigo-bird is one of the bright-colored birds which suggest the tropics, and which impress beginners in bird study as rare and wonderful. The Indigo-bird is, in fact, common in all but the heavily-wooded parts of the country, particularly along the wilder country roads, where, from some tree-top or telegraph wire, a constant succession of bright-colored males pour out their simple but pleasing song. The female is as fond of retirement as her mate is of display. Her brown colors are seldom seen, unless the bushes where her nest is hung be disturbed. Then, with nervous movements of the tail, and a soft *tup* of alarm, she moves restlessly about till joined by her brilliant partner. The nest is neatly built of stalks and grasses, lined with soft materials, and placed in a fork not far from the ground. The four eggs are white and unmarked. The Indigo-bird is a rather late comer in spring. It is often the middle of May before the bulk of the species return to their favorite breeding places. The male is a persistent singer, and continues his song well into July, even in the heat of noonday. In August the bright feathers are moulted, and the males, now silent, become as brown as the females. Only on the wings and tail do they retain a suggestion of blue. The whole family now haunt the weedy patches and evergreen fields, and live largely on seeds. By the end of September they have left New England, and they continue their journey southward till they pass into tropical America.

## White-bellied Swallow, or Tree Swallow. 22.

[TACHYCINETA BICOLOR.]

The White-bellied Swallow, or Martin, as it was often called by the early settlers, like the Chimney Swift and the Phœbe, quickly adjusted itself to the changes made by the white man's arrival. The bird had nested for centuries in woodpeckers' holes in dead trees, but when the early settlers saw its disposition to visit the neighborhood of man, they built boxes in which it immediately took up its residence. In many parts of the country the martin box was a familiar feature of farm life, and was shared often by the Bluebird or the Wren; now the Martin has disappeared from many of its haunts, retreating before the advance of suburban life. It is still a very common bird to the northward, and in spring and fall immense flocks pass up and back, especially along the seashore. It is fond of the bayberries, and thousands may sometimes be seen hovering over the bushes or lighting on the telegraph wires near by. When the time comes for an onward flight, the fluttering mass rises high above the ground, and circles about in apparent confusion, finally streaming out to the southward. The White-bellied Swallow is the earliest swallow to arrive in spring, reaching New England in early April. A few are hardy enough to spend the winter in Florida; the vast majority, however, join the other species in the tropics. The scarcity of the White-bellied Swallow in many of the old breeding places, and its total disappearance in some, is much to be regretted. From the morning of their arrival in April the birds enlivened the neighborhood with their shrill twitterings and active flight. Not even the graceful Barn Swallow can wholly make good the loss.

---

## Warbling Vireo. 6.

[VIREO GILVUS.]

A summer spent in the tops of tall street trees is not one of which the public has much knowledge; few, therefore, become

acquainted with the Warbling Vireo. His colors harmonize so well with his surroundings that only those who are attracted by his notes are aware of his presence. In New England this Vireo arrives in the first few days of May, and from that time on, except for an interval in August, may be heard singing at nearly every hour of the day till his departure in the middle of September. The song consists of a short series of warbled notes, sweet and musical, very attractive to those who know it, but not at all striking. The bird often prefaces the song with a curious squeaking sound, and both sexes have a scolding note very similar to the Catbird's *meow*. The nest is a neat cup hung to a twig, generally high in the tree. Both sexes take turns in brooding, and the male often sings on the nest. The eggs are four or five, laid early in June, white with a few dark spots at the large end. The food consists of insects caught on the foliage of the trees. Most of them are injurious caterpillars, and the bird's service in keeping the foliage from destruction is incalculable.

---

### Yellow-throated Vireo. 11.

[VIREO FLAVIFRONS.]

The Yellow-throated Vireo, like its cousin the Warbling Vireo, frequents either the street and dooryard trees or groves. It also arrives in the first week of May, and sings up to the time of its departure, in the middle of September. Its fearlessness and affection, and its loud, cheerful song, endear this bird to any close observer of its ways. The nest is built with the skill and taste which characterizes the architecture of the whole Vireo family. Both sexes share in the construction and in the subsequent labors of incubation and feeding. The eggs are four, white with dark spots at the larger end. The young are fed with caterpillars, which the parents find on the foliage of the neighboring trees. The female often shows great confidence in man, and has even allowed herself to be fed on the nest. The male is fearless in the defence of the

nest, and utters, when alarmed or excited, a loud, scolding chatter. The song, which is often delivered while the male is sitting on the eggs, resembles in form that of the Red-eyed Vireo, but is louder, slower, and sweeter, though marred by an occasional harsh note. The Yellow-throated Vireo is not found in northern New England, but from Massachusetts southward it is a common bird. It winters outside the limits of the United States.

---

### Chestnut-sided Warbler. 15.

[DENDRÆCA PENNSILVANICA.]

In the shrubbery that borders all well-kept country roads, and in the young growth of forest clearings, the Chestnut-sided Warbler finds food and shelter. It is easy to find the bird, if one follows the bright song that sounds at regular intervals from the shrubbery, and very easy to recognize the singer from its bright and varied markings. The female resembles the male, but has duller colors. The song is extremely like that of the Yellow Warbler, but ends with a more decided *wee'-chee*. The two birds are not likely to inhabit the same places, the Yellow Warbler preferring the neighborhood of water or the vicinity of man. Besides this sharp, emphatic song, the Chestnut-sided Warbler has also a looser, weaker one, which for some people is harder to distinguish from other Warbler songs. The Chestnut-sided Warbler reaches New England early in May, and by the end of the month has built in some low bush, often on a blackberry cane, a dainty nest of thin bark, mixed with downy substances, and lined with hairs. Here are laid four or five eggs, colored, like most of the Warblers' eggs, white with reddish markings. The birds find their insect food in the trees and bushes, and occasionally fly out after some winged creature that they have disturbed. A few individuals, possibly migrants from the north, pass through New England in early October, and the winter quarters of the race are in the tropics.

## Black-throated Green Warbler. 12.

[*DENDRÆCA VIRENS.*]

The frequent visitor to deep pine woods is struck with a curious, insect-like song which is incessantly repeated from the waving tops above him. Two wheezy notes, followed by two higher ones, either lazily drawled or quickened in double time, make up the performance. A glance at the bird shows a black throat and yellow cheeks; the green which is included in the name is rarely visible in the live bird. In cedars, pitch pines, and white pines, the Black-throated Green Warbler is a common bird from early May to the end of summer. Migrants from the north pass through New England as late as October. The nest of this little bird with the cumbersome name is neatly built of twigs, bark, and grass, lined with feathers or hair, and placed on a fork or branch of an evergreen. The eggs are three or four, white, marked, chiefly at the larger end, with reddish spots. Like all its family, this Warbler lives on insects which it finds in trees. It is oftenest seen on migration, when it visits the orchards and copses. In winter it passes across the Gulf to Central America.

---

## Pine Warbler. 18.

[*DENDRÆCA VIGORSII.*]

The Pine Warbler is the first of its family to arrive in the spring, and often lingers late in the fall. On some warm morning in the first week of April, a lazy trill sounding among the pitch pines announces the bird's arrival. Its whole summer is spent in the tops of the pines, either in the low, open groves of the pitch pine, or in the tall, dense tops of the white pine. Like many of the wood-warblers, it is oftener heard than seen, but in spring, when migrating, the Pine Warbler visits the orchard trees, and occasionally feeds for a moment on the ground. The nest is built in the pines, generally among the needles toward the end of a limb.

It is neatly constructed of bits of bark and grasses, lined with soft substances, and in it are laid three or four eggs, white with reddish markings, chiefly about the larger end. The food of this Warbler consists of insects, which are gleaned from the pines in which the bird lives. The pleasantest associations gather about the Pine Warbler's song, which suggests the quiet murmur of the tree-tops from which it descends.

---

### Oven-bird. 10.

[SIURUS AUROCAPILLUS.]

The Oven-bird, like the Whip-poor-will, is oftener heard than seen. The loud, emphatic teacher, *teacher*, TEACHER, TEACHER, TEACHER, to borrow Mr. Burroughs's apt description, rings out from every piece of open woodland from early May to July. A sight of the singer may be obtained by a little patient hunting. Following the repeated outbursts, the observer becomes aware of the little fellow, standing on a low limb, or walking nervously back and forth, with a curious tipping of the tail. Or, if very fortunate, he frightens the female from her covered (oven-shaped) nest in the dry leaves, and sees her run off, dragging an apparently wounded wing. A rambling dog will often alarm a pair of Oven-birds, and their loud *chuck* will many times assemble around the intruder vireos, thrushes, chickadees, and a grave tanager, all the woodland inmates. In the little covered nest lie four white eggs, marked with reddish-brown or lilac. A few Oven-birds linger into late September, and the greater part of the family winter in the tropics. The fame of the Oven-bird rests on a performance which, though not rare, comparatively few have heard. Toward evening, the male often mounts to a considerable height, and then plunges down, singing a medley of excited notes, in which a bit of his usual song generally finds a place.

## Maryland Yellow-throat. 9.

[GEOTHLYPIS TRICHAS.]

It is strange that so common and brightly marked a bird as the Maryland Yellow-throat should be so little known. It is true that it frequents wet or swampy land, and spends most of its time hidden in the bushes. When the male sings, however, he mounts to some exposed perch, and, with head thrown back, utters his bright and characteristic song. This varies according to the region; in some places it resembles the syllables *witchery, witchery, witchery*; in others he seems to say *wee-see'-sir, wee-see'-sir, wee-see'-sir*; and again the song varies to *wee-see-see'-see*, thrice repeated. The Yellow-throats, like many other secretive birds, are very inquisitive, and may always be lured from their retreat by any squeaking noise. First they betray their presence by a wren-like *chuck*, then mounting with quick, nervous jerks show their bright throats or black masks for a moment, and again retreat into the tangled bushes. When excited, they utter a scolding chatter, and the male often, in moments of excitement or exhilaration, mounts to a height of twenty or thirty feet, and utters a mixture of song notes as he descends. The female and young lack the black and ashy mask of the male. The nest is bulky, is placed on or near the ground, and contains usually four white eggs, marked, generally at the larger end, with a few reddish-brown blotches. The Yellow-throat's food consists of the insects which abound in the bird's haunts. The Yellow-throats arrive in New England in the first week of May, and many linger well into the autumn, even as late as October. They winter from Florida southward.

---

## Redstart. 14.

[SETOPHAGA RUTICILLA.]

The Redstart is one of the commonest and most attractive of the Warblers, and, unlike many of the family, it frequents the shrub-

bery and trees in the neighborhood of houses, particularly where there is water. Here it pursues its insect food, often flying after it, in the manner of a flycatcher. Its tail and wings are frequently spread, showing their bright markings, and through most of the summer the sharp, insect-like song of the male is a constant sound in the bird's haunts. The nest is placed generally in the fork of a small tree, or shrub, from five to twenty feet above the ground. It is a pretty structure, built of strips of bark and soft materials. If wool is put out when the bird is building, it is often seized and worked into the nest. The four eggs are white, marked with dark lilac or brown spots, more thickly at the larger end. The Redstart's song is short, and resembles the syllables *wee'-see-wee'-see-wee'*. This is often varied to one with quite a different effect, something like the syllables *chee-wee'-o-wee'-o*. The Redstart arrives in the first days of May, and stays into early October. The females and young lack the bright colors of the male; the males, however, often appear the second spring in the plain colors of the preceding year, so that one frequently hears the song delivered by a bird that is apparently a female. The majority of the birds pass into the West Indies or Central America in winter.

---

## Brown Thrasher, or Brown Thrush. 20.

[HARPORRYNCHUS RUFUS.]

The Brown Thrasher, or Brown Thrush, shares with its cousin the Catbird great skill in concealing its long body and tail in deep shrubbery. A glimpse of rich brown as it flits quickly across the road, or skulks from one bush to the next, is often all that one sees of this fine bird. In spring, however, from the end of April till June, it is often possible to observe the bird to great advantage. When the male sings, he mounts to the top of some small tree, and, sitting there for hours, pours out such a succession of brilliant phrases as makes the hillsides ring. The long tail is then depressed and the bill thrown upward. The female is meanwhile sitting not

far off, under or in some low bush. The nest is built of strips of bark and leaves, and is never far above the ground. The eggs are four or five, whitish covered with many light-brown markings. Insects and fruit constitute the food of the Thrasher. Many individuals linger well into October, and winter in the Southern States. The Thrashers when alarmed utter a loud *chuck*, a hissing or puffing note, like a reptile's, a loud sound like a smack, and a long, whistled *where*. Their song is justly ranked among the best, as far as brilliant execution is concerned. It lacks the sweetness that the true Thrushes possess, but excels in vigor and variety. The Thrashers do not frequent the neighborhood of man as the Catbirds do, and rarely pilfer in the garden. They keep to their own wild, fearless life, but if they should diminish, the lovers of early spring would miss them sadly.

---

### White-bellied Nuthatch. 4.

[SITTA CAROLINENSIS.]

No one can fail to recognize a Nuthatch. No other bird has the short, broad figure, and the habit of travelling head downward on the trunks or large limbs of trees. In winter, the Nuthatch makes one of the band of small birds that visits the village and dooryard trees, and if suet or bone is hung to a tree near the house, the bird may be attracted, and become a regular and frequent visitor. The Nuthatch, like the Chickadee, is resident; in spring it seeks a deserted woodpecker's hole, and here, in a mass of soft materials, such as wool, feathers, and hair, the bird lays from seven to nine eggs, beginning toward the end of April. The eggs are white, coarsely spotted with reddish. After the young are hatched and out, small parties may often be met with, hunting over the trees, the parents probing under the bark with their long bills for insects, their eggs, or their larvæ. This life is now followed till the next spring,—a life spent wholly on the limbs or trunks of trees. Only occasionally does a Nuthatch visit the ground, or perch

on a smaller twig. The ordinary note of the bird is a loud nasal *ank*, *ank*, and the spring song is a rapid repetition of this note in a modified form ; it may be likened to the tooting of a little trumpet.

---

## Veery, or Wilson's Thrush. 25.

[HYLOCICHLA FUSCESCENS.]

The Veery, or Wilson's Thrush, is the commonest of the genus in the greater part of eastern North America. It inhabits every piece of wet woodland and wooded swamp. It is shy, like all its kind, but may often be seen feeding in the paths or shaded roads, running and pulling up in the manner of Robins. Its food consists of insects, small snails, and berries. The song of the Veery is less fine than that of either the Wood Thrush or the Hermit, but it has a peculiar charm. It consists of a series of ringing phrases, each lower in the scale than the preceding, and resembling somewhat the syllables *tee-u-ry*, *tee-u-ry*, *tee-u-ry*; the last notes often ring with a fine metallic quaver. The gloom of the woods, the general quiet, and the invisibility of the singer, all heighten the charm of the performance. The ordinary call of the Veery is a harsh *phen*, which is modified to various melancholy or angry tones. The arrival of the Veery in early May is not heralded by its song. It is often a week after its arrival before it sings. The nest is placed on or near the ground, in some moist or swampy woodland, and is composed of grasses, leaves, and bits of bark, lined within with roots and fine grass. The eggs are four, light blue with a greenish tint. The Veeries, like the Wood Thrushes, cease to sing in July, and are rarely seen after the middle of August. They winter beyond the limits of the United States.

# INDEX.

---

|                                          | Page |
|------------------------------------------|------|
| BLACKBIRD, CROW . . . . .                | 7    |
| BUNTING, BAY-WINGED . . . . .            | 8    |
| INDIGO . . . . .                         | 11   |
| TOWHEE . . . . .                         | 8    |
| CARDINAL . . . . .                       | 9    |
| CHEBEC . . . . .                         | 5    |
| CHEWINK . . . . .                        | 8    |
| COWBIRD . . . . .                        | 5    |
| CUCKOO, BLACK-BILLED . . . . .           | 1    |
| YELLOW-BILLED . . . . .                  | 1    |
| FINCH, GRASS . . . . .                   | 8    |
| FLYCATCHER, LEAST . . . . .              | 5    |
| GRACKLE, BRONZED . . . . .               | 7    |
| PURPLE . . . . .                         | 7    |
| GROSBEEK, CARDINAL . . . . .             | 9    |
| ROSE-BREASTED . . . . .                  | 10   |
| INDIGO-BIRD . . . . .                    | 11   |
| LARK. <i>See</i> MEADOWLARK.             |      |
| MARTIN . . . . .                         | 12   |
| MARYLAND YELLOW THROAT . . . . .         | 17   |
| MEADOWLARK . . . . .                     | 6    |
| NUTHATCH, WHITE-BELLIED . . . . .        | 19   |
| OVEN-BIRD . . . . .                      | 16   |
| PEWEE, WOOD . . . . .                    | 4    |
| PHEBE . . . . .                          | 3    |
| REDBIRD . . . . .                        | 9    |
| REDSTART . . . . .                       | 17   |
| SPARROW, VESPER . . . . .                | 8    |
| SWALLOW, TREE OR WHITE-BELLIED . . . . . | 12   |
| THRASHER, BROWN . . . . .                | 18   |

# INDEX — *Continued.*

|                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| THRUSH, BROWN . . . . .                 | 18 |
| GOLDEN-CROWNED. <i>See</i> OVEN-BIRD.   |    |
| WILSON'S OR TAWNY . . . . .             | 20 |
| TOWHEE . . . . .                        | 8  |
| VEERY . . . . .                         | 20 |
| VIREO, WARBLING . . . . .               | 12 |
| YELLOW-THROATED . . . . .               | 13 |
| WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED GREEN . . . . . | 15 |
| CHESTNUT-SIDED . . . . .                | 14 |
| PINE . . . . .                          | 15 |
| WHIP-POOR-WILL . . . . .                | 2  |
| WOODPECKER, RED-HEADED . . . . .        | 2  |
| YELLOW-THROAT, MARYLAND . . . . .       | 17 |



# A First Book of Birds.

By OLIVE THORNE MILLER. With twenty full page illustrations, eight of which are colored. Square 12mo. \$1.00.

MRS. MILLER, to whom lovers of birds are so much indebted for her charming books, now adds to our obligation by a bird book intended for children. It describes birds' nests, the young birds,—their growth and how they are fed, how they get their feathers, and are taught to fly. Then it tells of the language of birds, their food, their migrations, their mental and moral development, their structure, their economic value to mankind. In short it may be called a small encyclopædia of birds, full of information and exceedingly interesting. Its value and interest are greatly increased by many pictures of birds.

---

## The Woodpeckers.

By MRS. FANNIE HARDY ECKSTORM. With five Colored Illustrations by LOUIS AGASSI FUERTES, and other illustrations in the text. Square 12mo. \$1.00.

THIS is a new departure among bird books. Mrs. Eckstorm has taken a single group of birds,—a family of marked individuality, the several species of which are for the most part easily observed and identified, a family which is represented in all parts of our country,—and she has given a lively yet accurate and orderly account of this family, treating somewhat exhaustively of five of the commonest species, and less fully of the others. There are also several chapters on the habits of woodpeckers in general, and on their structural peculiarities. Their four tools of trade—bill, foot, tail, and tongue—receive special attention. The volume is attractively illustrated.

---

*Sold by all Booksellers. Sent, postpaid, by*  
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY, BOSTON.

11 East 17th Street, New York.



